

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Long Road Home



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Introduction

The Long Road Home Teacher's Guide gives students an opportunity to interact with literature, art and the newspaper through this story by Katherine Paterson. The illustrations are provided by Emily Arnold McCully. Based on a true story, *Long Road Home* chronicles the dangerous travels of the Lleshi family — Albanian Muslims who live in the disputed province of Kosovo in Serbia, 1999. The Serbian government, under dictator Slobodan Milosevic, is determined to drive ethnic Albanians out of Serbia. Fleeing the oppressive Serbs, the family travels from the city to the mountains, to a relative's farm, to a Serbian train that takes them to the Macedonian border, to a refuge camp in Macedonia, and finally to the United States. The fast-paced yet haunting story is reminiscent of the accounts by Jews who lived in Germany under Hitler.

Conflict in Kosovo

This section provides a timeline showing the long history of conflict between Serbs and Albanians. The timeline contains information that helps to explain why the Albanians felt that they had lost their previous autonomy under Milosevic. Several websites are listed which provide resources for more detailed information.

Lesson Plans

The chapter lessons are divided into three parts:

Vocabulary identifies important vocabulary words in the chapter.

Let's Discuss provides questions that encourage students to think about what is happening in the story.

The final question for each chapter asks students to predict what will happen in the next installment.

In the Real World asks students to connect events and topics in the chapter to the real world through newspaper activities.

Additional Activities

Additional instructional activities related to the content of the story are suggested. A crossword puzzle and a word search puzzle are provided.

Acknowledgements

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Conflict in Kosovo

Long Road Home is set in Kosovo in 1999, a time when the North Atlantic Treaty Organization threatened, then conducted, air strikes against Serbia because Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic mistreated ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. The Serbian-Albanian conflict, however, has a long history.

Here are some key dates in Kosovo's history:

12th century

Kosovo is the heart of the Serbian empire, under the Nemanjic dynasty. Many Serbian Orthodox churches and monasteries are built.

June 28, 1389

A key day in Kosovo's history. The Battle of Kosovo is won by the Turks and Kosovo comes under 500 years of Turkish Ottoman rule. Many Christian Serbs leave the area. Many Albanians convert from Roman Catholicism to Islam. Albanians hold positions of power and authority under the Ottoman empire. Muslims and Albanians become the dominant powers.

1912

After the Balkan Wars, Serbia regains control of Kosovo from the Turks.

1918

The Ottoman empire collapses and Kosovo becomes part of the kingdom of Serbia.

1941

World War II — Much of Kosovo becomes part of Albania, which is controlled by the Italians.

1946

Kosovo becomes part of the Yugoslav federation.

1960

Kosovo's autonomy increases.

1968

Albanians are permitted to display the national flag of Albania in Kosovo; they adopt the official Albanian literary language.

1974

The Yugoslav constitution gives Kosovo autonomous status, making it a de facto self-governing province.

1987

Future president Slobodan Milosevic gains the support of Kosovo Serbs who are claiming harassment by the majority Albania community.

1989

Now president of Yugoslavia, Milosevic strips Kosovo of its autonomy.

1990

Ethnic Albanian leaders declare independence from Yugoslavia. Belgrade dissolves the Kosovo government and fires more than 100,000 ethnic Albanian workers, including government and media workers. Albanians stage a general strike.

1992

Kosovo's self-proclaimed republic elects Ibrahim Rugova president.

1996

The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) is formed.

1998

There is open conflict between Serb police and the KLA. Milosevic launches a crackdown on ethnic Albanians. About 1.5 million Albanians are expelled from their homes. NATO orders Milosevic to halt the crackdown.

1999

March: Kosovo signs a peace accord, but Belgrade rejects the internationally brokered deal. NATO begins air strikes against Yugoslavia.

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1999

June: Milosevic agrees to withdraw troops from Kosovo and NATO stops air strikes. The United Nations sets up a peacekeeping force in Kosovo and the KLA agrees to disarm.

2002

Ibrahim Rugova is elected president by the Kosovo parliament.

2003

There are direct talks between Serbian and Kosovo Albanian leaders. The United Nations sets conditions for final status talks in 2005.

2004

March: Violence erupts again between Serbs and Albanians — 1,000 Serbs are driven from their homes by ethnic Albanians.

2004

October: President Rugova's party wins a general election but Serbs boycott the election.

2004

December: Parliament re-elects Rugova president. A coalition government is set up.

Additional information can be found at these websites:**www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook**

CIA—The World Factbook: provides detailed information about every country in the world.

www.nato.int/kosovo/history.htm

NATO & Kosovo: Historical Overview: provides information about the history of NATO's experiences in Kosovo.

news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/special_report/1998/kosovo/110492.stm

BBC News—Kosovo—History, bloody history: provides a detailed history of the animosity between Serbs and Albanians.

A Family of Kosovars



Let's Discuss

1. Where does Meli live now? Where had she lived before?
2. What tells Meli that her family is about to face trouble?
3. Why is Adem Jashari so important to Meli's family?
4. How does Meli describe the changing atmosphere between her family and their Serbian neighbors?
5. Why are the Albanian families so concerned about the Serbians when they greatly outnumber the Serbians?
6. What special privilege do the adults in the family give to Meli's older brother Mehmet? Why?
7. How does Meli console herself that she, too, is special?
8. Why are the adults meeting? Why are they upset?
9. What is the KLA? Why is it important in this story?
10. Make a prediction: How will the killing of Adem Jashari affect relations between the Albanians and the Serbs?

In the Real World

Collect newspaper stories about conflicts between groups in the same country. Write several sentences explaining the conflict. Put your story and writing on a bulletin board display.

Vocabulary

Eavesdrop, v

listen to another's conversation without permission

Kosovar, n

a resident of Kosovo, a province of Serbia. Some Kosovars are ethnic Serbians and others are Albanians. Over the years, both Albania and Serbia have claimed Kosovo.

Oppressive, adj

using power against someone in an unfair way

Senseless, adj

without reason or cause

A Costly Caricature

Let's Discuss

1. Why is Meli so concerned that her younger brother and sister might have overheard what the adults are discussing?
2. What makes the killing of Adem Jashari so horrific?
3. What are Meli's fears after she hears the news?
4. How does Meli's mother indicate that Meli, too, is now considered an adult?
5. What is Uncle Fadil's plan to help the family?
6. What makes Meli and her father believe that they should stay in the city?
7. How are the Serbian and Albanian schools different?
8. What act causes Meli to have to stay after school?
9. Why is Mehmet's reaction to Meli's problem unusual?
10. Make a prediction: What has happened to Mehmet?

**In the Real World**

Find a newspaper story that reports the loss of a popular leader. This could be a death or a defeat in an election. Write a paragraph about what the person's followers could do to continue the leader's ideas.

Vocabulary**Caricature, n**

A drawing of a person that exaggerates one or more physical characteristics

Forestalling, v

Preventing or heading off an action

Loitering, v

Standing around with no reason or purpose

Massacre, n

The vicious killing of a large number of people

Mehmet is Missing

Let's Discuss

1. Why isn't Meli's father concerned about her misbehavior at school?
2. Why do you think Meli's father is so anxious about Mehmet?
3. What fear about Mehmet crosses Meli's mind?
4. What information does Meli's father learn from Mehmet's friend Neshim?
5. Why is Meli distressed when she sees the look her parents exchange when her father says that none of Mehmet's friends saw anything?
6. Why is going to the police an act of true desperation for Meli's family?
7. Why is it important for Meli to go along to the police station?
8. Make a prediction: What will Papa learn at the police station?



In the Real World

Find a newspaper story about a person who has been arrested in the United States. Make a list of the steps the person will go through before he/she goes to trial. Then, write a comparison between the treatment of Albanians in Kosovo and citizens in this country.

Vocabulary

Anxiety, n

A sense of fear; extreme worry

Etched, adj

Permanently fixed as if it were carved

Posturing, v

Acting as if you are something you are not

Propaganda, n

Communications design to persuade someone to accept a specific political point of view

Searching for Mehmet

Let's Discuss

1. Why does Meli insist upon going to the police station with her father?
2. Why do you think Papa acts in such a meek and mild manner at the police station?
3. How does Papa phrase his comments so it doesn't look like he is accusing the police?
4. Why do you think Papa tells Meli to "pray for your brother"?
5. Why does Meli feel personally responsible for Mehmet's fate?
6. How do you think Meli feels when Mehmet does return home?
7. Why do you think Mehmet is so convinced that the family must leave the city soon?
8. Make a prediction: What will the family do now?



In the Real World

Find the names of three local officials in your newspaper. List the official and explain how that person might be able to help you find out about a missing family member.

Vocabulary

Custody, n

Having physical control over someone

Gaunt, adj

Extremely thin

Lording over, v

Acting in a superior way, as if you are better than others